



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Butte Forest Thin Prescribed Fire Project (8CA03417)		
PROJECT LOCATION	The project is located approximately two miles northwest of the town of Magalia in Butte county, CA. MDM T24N R3E S27, 34, 35	COUNTY	Butte
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Notice of Exemption is for an approximately 100-acre broadcast burn within the existing 220-acre Butte Forest Thin Prescribed Fire Project.

The BLM would utilize prescribed fire on approximately 220-acres of fire-adapted forestland to facilitate forest succession, improve forest health, and reduce fire hazard in two locations of the Forks of Butte. The Burn would be implemented during non-fire season months that typically occur between early fall through spring. Burn units would be subdivided as needed to facilitate control efforts and manage smoke based on burn day smoke dispersion. Burning in each unit would occur on up to four occasions over a 10-15-year period. Burn treatments would create defensible space in treated areas that are adjacent to existing and planned private residences, strategic fuel breaks and fuel reduction zones along ridgelines and adjacent to infrastructure. All burning would be completed under a prescribed fire burn plan approved by the State Fire Management Officer. Burns would be conducted using hand ignition and other standard prescribed fire methods. Burn prescriptions would aim to reduce surface fuel loading 25-85% and understory woody vegetative cover by 15-65% from pre-burn levels. Reentry burns may occur up to three additional times over a 15 year period. **

The project is located approximately two miles northwest of the town of Magalia, in Butte County, California. The project area consists of two separate land parcels located along the upper slopes of Forks of Butte Creek ACEC in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Butte Creek flows in a southwesterly direction between the units, with the canyon running parallel to Doe Mill Ridge. The western unit (160-acres) is situated on an east facing aspect of Doe Mill Ridge and the eastern unit (60-acres) is less than a mile to the southeast across Butte Creek on a west facing Aspect. Slopes are 0-60% and elevation range from 2,400' to 3,200'. **

The Forks of Butte area, with steep slopes and dense forested vegetation, has a high risk of human fire starts due to camping and other recreation activities occurring along Butte Creek. Vegetation thinning completed by the BLM to reduce fuels and thin the forest has occurred on a limited basis along roadways and through past timber harvesting such as the 2012 Butte Forest Thin, but over the past 30 years such treatments have occurred on less than 5% of the land. As time proceeds without a fire, forest vegetation continues to become denser, with corresponding surface and canopy fuel accumulations that increase the probability that a high intensity, fuel driven fire occurs. Such a fire would likely result in significant adverse impacts to area natural resources and surrounding communities. **

**** This is from federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment for the Butte Forest Thin Prescribed Fire <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=77069>**

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 § 15304
Minor Alterations to Land
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- ☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))



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☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

It has been determined that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. This project is consistent with the requirements stated in Section 15304; Minor Alterations to land, and will have no significant environmental impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

SEP 10 2018

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE


Helge Eng, Deputy Director Date 9/7/18
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection